Twelve Midnight

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He knows that she sees his smiles, the ones he's tried to hide and the ones that

have lit his whole face up. The smile that only she can bring out in him. And

in those moments, new, old, and in between.

Their love is not just a memory but a living, breathing thing that grows and

changes with them. No matter how many years go by, their love will always

be the one constant in their lives.

The First Night

They christen their new apartment
by cooking together,
whirling through the kitchen in a
choreographed dance,
forgetting what drawer, the chopping board is in,
laughing when their elbows brush.
When she slices her finger, he runs
the tap over the cut and bandages
it for her, kissing it better.
The pain fades instantly with
the touch of his mouth,
and the steam curls through the air.
As they lock eyes over their dinner,
the warm silence of the kitchen speaks for them:
I made this meal for you.
I want to cook dinner with you every night.
until we are old and gray.

Collide

When we collide

It’s like taking a bite of your favorite dish.

one that you haven't had in a while.

So satisfying and necessary.

When we collide

It’s so legendary that people speak about our union.

like it's a myth that doesn't exist.

When we collide it's like a chef's kiss.

So perfect and amazing in every way.

When we collide, I wish I could be with you forever.

giving and receiving pleasure

that's always beyond measure.

that's only achieved when we're together.

When we collide

our bodies, our hearts, and our minds intertwine.

and move smoothly as one.

Our collision is second to none.

and when I think that it's done

you sing softly in my ear.

We've only just begun.

The Question

Is you is or is you ain't my baby?

That's the question I've been thinking about lately

But currently, that's not on my mind.

It was a grind trying to get to you, but it was worth it

to hear those words *"Baby, I am yours."*

Some days you drive me crazy,

but most days it's all love and happiness.

Like Al Green says, "It's something that'll make you do wrong and right."

But with you, I try with all my might to do the latter.

All the others before you don't matter because it's all about us.

When we started, I thought about trust because

I've been burned so many times

and I burned my fair share.

When you saw my imperfections,

you didn't stop and stare in disgust.

You brought me close and whispered in my ear *"I don't care."*

You stared into my eyes lovingly and said *I got you.*

It was that moment I knew I wanted to wrap my arms around you

and hold you tight forever. Will you be mine in that way?

Will you never get tired of me and always stay?

I said all this just to say, “Will you marry me?”

Sacred Cove

Laying here with you
On this couch.
Lost in this quiet sacred cove
We've come to call our own.
Just you and I, no outside world to contend with.
Skin to skin, I wander in search of your heart.
With every intention of getting lost.
Come what may, if I become thirsty
I have your lips to replenish me.
The intimacy of drinking water together,
You fill me, as forever long we get to lay here.
An eternity more when I must leave.
The outside world continues.
Here in the quiet sacred cove of your arms
I am safe and without worry.
Here in the quiet sacred cove of your arms
I have found your heart.
And threw away any claims to a map.
There isn't a need to discover what's been there

The whole time

And that is your love.

Human After All

In the darkness of my mind
Insecurities wander like ghosts and goblins.
Whispers of fear and doubt linger all about.
But when I am in your arms everything
Feels all right.
There are no more chains rattling.
No more terror roaming through the night,
no more being afraid to walk down the hall.
When you're here with me
There is no need to hurry,
Getting from point A to B.
Your touch eases all my worries.
The light that eradicates all the darkness
That comes with a storm.
When I am with you.
You show me that I am safe,
That there was never anything to be worried about.
Like most things, insecurities come,
And they go.

But with you. You've shown me that I am,

Complete and being human.

Is human after all.

Trash Man

I see beauty in broken things.
I see the things that you attempt to hide,
I have absolutely no problem finding these things,
And breathing life back into these
Perfect imperfections.
No matter how far you go, to stuff these things.
Whether down in your heart or deep in your mind.
Eventually, there is only so much stuffing
You can do before I notice.
It doesn't matter how tired I may be
Or how my face may appear.
I'll lift the top of the bin that you try to hide
And collect the pieces of yourself that you
Throw away.
I collect these pieces of you that you feel
Aren't worthy and remind you that without them.
There would be no you.

I may not wear coveralls, or come on a specific day of the week,

but I know the beauty of sacrifice.

And in my hands, there is nothing more beautiful.

Then to remind you.

That you are not broken and there is nothing

To hide.

Umm... Can I...

of all the things that we do together

and as much time we spend together.

there is still one thing that I am uncomfortable

doing around you. especially if we're at your place.

at times I know you can sense it, but you pretend

all the same. no matter how much you laugh

on the inside.

or wait until I am not in view.

even for the most natural of human functions,

it happens to creep up on me.

no matter how much I try to prepare before seeing you.

It's not really a shame, it's more awkward than anything.

even when I do reveal to you that I must use the bathroom,

It's more embarrassing than anything.

It's so sweet when you ask.

Is it number one? or number two?

knowing the answer before you even ask

Their love grows. Reflected in every smile shared between the two. a place where their shadows etch their journey. Through fear, time grows. They guide each other closer.

Hey! Can I Come Too?

here in this room, I used to lay awake at night.

just me. Myself. and my thoughts.

one thought was my friend fear.

fear that you'd find someone new.

then it'll be me. Myself. and my thoughts again.

With the occasional visit from my friend fear.

Outward turned foot, appearing out of nowhere.

But through it all.

I've learned to trust in you.

I've found strength in the bond that we've created.

whether the relief of you being there through

some of my toughest times

or being the ear of my secret tree.

or even realizing that you are indeed my best friend.

Without the inclusion of others. Fear included.

eventually, my sleuth-footed friend Fear did walk away.

that one good friend that turns out

wasn't such a good friend after all.

He was just always there.
Once I stopped feeding him, the truth did come out
and he stopped coming around.
most friends like that only come around because
they know you'll pay for everything.
In more ways than one.
When fear walked out.
Love walked in.
You walked in, uninterrupted.

Pieces of Glass

When I look into your eyes
I see the doubt of lingering questions.
The strength of our love
And if it can prevail.
I see the things you've been through.
The trail of swept pieces of broken glass.
Shining through the dark.
I've both a broom and a dustpan.
And don't have a problem,
Getting on hand and knee.
Sometimes, that is stronger than
Fear itself.
The strength of another to help
Get you through the dark.
That is what you taught me
The first time I met you.
I didn't see any of your fears,
Anything that resembled a troubled past.
I saw your light.

Okay, maybe a hint of glass.

But there isn't a part of me

That is afraid to hold on to you

With everything that I have.

When you look into my eyes.

One of the things I sincerely

Hope that you see.

Is trust.

Trust to love gain

Emergency Contact

My heart was racing, then boom.
It jumped the curb and ran into
A building.
The airbag deployed.
The thought of insurance didn't come
to mind.
The stress insurmountable,
And not a soul to call.
The rest of the cars kept driving by.
My heart and the way it feels
Sitting along the side of the curb
Without a lifeline.
With every reason to tremble
About getting around.
A friendly face.
Your presence in the manifestation
Of a prayer.
Listening to you, I know the error
Of my way.

It was stupid, it was reckless.
For a heart to drive that fast.
The amount of repair for a broken
heart can be costly.
I've saved for a day like this.
Naturally, I had other plans
for the amount I'd saved.
The rest of the cars kept driving by.
But you, you stopped.
Somehow, I am a bit at ease.
Meeting you, I know that everything
Will be all right.
One day I am going to look back
On this day as the day, I was
Ready to give up.
On that same day, when I do look back.
I am going to look at this day as the day
I trusted you with something that means the
world to me.
And when I do.
I hope to still get those same goosebumps.

It’s not always easy, trusting another with your heart.

Gasoline

when I am running on fumes

you fill me up.

igniting my engine to throttle a bit harder.

A bit faster.

you rev me up regardless of the number of bumps,

regardless of the amount of twists

and turns in the road ahead.

my heart belongs to you.

propelling me towards the sunset.

the reason I speed down the street in this passionate flight.

Not afraid to jump any unsuspecting hill.

most might think that I am crazy, the way that I drive.

if they knew the reason why, they'd press the pedal down

as well.

when I am running on fumes, rev me up, rev me up.

Baby rev me up.

I am a well-oiled machine with a place to be.
whether towards the moon or the sun.
you're the gasoline that ignites the spark
that pushes me to go a little further.

Cross Necklace

I didn't want to lose you
So, I slipped you around the necklace
That hangs from around my neck.
So, you'll always be close.
I've always wanted something
Near and dear to my heart.
Something that I could show off
To the world that I felt represented me.
Something whose weight would
Bring me comfort,
Ultimately to the point that I would forget was there.
Becoming a part of me.
In times of stress, I'd grab you
And slip the bottom part of you in my mouth.
Tuning out the rest of the world.
If my necklace ever broke, I'd rush
To get it fixed.
But
None of that would mean anything.

If I were to lose you.

My good luck charm.

The Old and The New You

I love you exactly the way that you are.
Understandably things come and they go.
When the time comes and it's time
For things to go.
I'll remember the parts of you that made
me smile the most.
The part of you that you'll soon lose touch with.
That's decided to come along with me
And live forever.
We'll sit and we'll talk about old times,
You'll tell me your fears then I'll kiss you
For no other reason except that you are
Yourself.
As for the person that you are becoming
Old things must be cleared in order
For new things to come.
This also is a person I'll come to know
And love.
When the time comes and this version
Of you comes in.
There is nothing to fear.
I'll remember the parts of you that weren't
So easy to love. The parts of you that you're soon
To forget.

You'll tell me about all the changes
You've been through and how proud

You are to no longer be who you were,
Even then, with my lips.
I'll give you a brief reminder.
I love you exactly the way you are.

New Growth

All his life, he has been
as strong and tall as an oak tree,
towering over the world.
She sees through the canopy of leaves
and the protective layer of bark
that surrounds him.
She sees the new green shoots
of growth curling towards the light,
and the way his roots reach towards stability.
All his life, he has needed to be strong,
but with her, he can be vulnerable.
Underneath the soil, their
roots tangle together, like two
hands reaching out.

Hibachi for Two

The clang of spatulas scurry
Across the grill and fill our ears.
We sat and waited.
Moving from the bar to the
Half-squared table in front of the grill.
Drink in hand.
In the sizzle of rice, chicken,
Veggies, and steak.
Order to your heart’s delight.
If I add shrimp to mine,
Surely, you can add lobster to yours.
I savor this moment with you
Here in this cozy corner.
You're so thoughtful and so caring.
I think I want the lobster. How much does it cost?
Well, if it costs too much I won't
Order it. That's money we can use
For something else.
I am fine with what I have. Plus,

I am here with you.

Steam rises from the grill.

Yes, we'll add the shrimp and lobster

To the order. As well as a refill.

Another sake for me and an exotic

Mojito for the lady.

A splash of black raspberry to both.

In the crackle of spatula hitting

The grill.

I am delightfully happy sitting here

With you.

Once we get home.

We cannot forget to take the dog out

No, we cannot forget to take

The dog out

Come to Know

We may be different.
but there is a calmness that can't be denied.
from my revolving world to yours.
you came through like a storm
blowing away everything I thought I knew,
the life I've built swirling in the wind.
The people and places I've come to know.
me along with it.
You're fierce, patient, and deliberate.
most would run at the sight of you.
but personally, I don't see a reason to.
even thunder needs a place to rest its head
every now and again.
and when you do decide to come crashing down.
I plan to be there,
waiting to absorb everything that you have to give.
Leaving a trail that leads straight to me.
from one news station to the next.
let them wonder why you choose to strike

my lovely home the way that you do.

A place you too, will come to know.

When are you going to upgrade to an iPhone, so I can Facetime you? She

asks.

Gosh, It's not that difficult. Learning how to use the phone, that is.

There's nothing wrong with Google Meet. It's just different. Stop being

cheap.

In time everything changes

Cure All

You're my aspirin.
My one cure-all for all that ails.
You travel through my veins
And heal me with your love.
My broken parts, able to move free.
Aspirin for the soul,
Everlasting.
You touch, you mend. You soothe.
You heal effortlessly.
The only thing that goes that deep.
When I am in your presence
There is no more pain.
Regardless of what the doctors say.
Tylenol just doesn't cut it.

Safekeeping

After I kiss you goodbye,
I hold your smile in my cupped hands.
I keep my fingers tight,
careful not to let it slip out.
While I walk home, I tuck it
into my shirt pocket,
keeping it safe from the cold breeze.
I feel its warmth there, through
the fabric of my clothing
thumping like a heartbeat.
In the mirror, I retrieve it carefully,
and raise it to my mouth.
I press my lips against it softly,
and in that moment,
Your smile stretches across my face.

Come True

Living with you is like dancing in the rain.
Even when you're not here,
I feel you close.
Your laugh is like music to my ears,
And like a fool that everyone watches
I just dance.
In every move you make, in every
embrace, and gesture of your face.

I see the depth of our connection.
And I live and I dance in it.
In your eyes, I see
A lifetime of love, no matter
How big or small the splash.
I am grateful for every moment spent with you.
While everyone else is running
To keep from getting wet,
Or readying their umbrella.
Like a fool, I begin to smile
Without the slightest fear of getting
wet.
I am dancing in the reality
Of your breath living and breathing
on my skin.
Living with someone like you

is a dream come true.

Love with You

With the bills and the chores,

everything can feel so mundane,
dare I say ordinary.
Depending on the type of day we might've had.
The only time we might see each other
is when we're coming or going.
You pile the trash up until it runs over the floor

then ask why I haven't taken it out.
You leave all your makeup on the counter,

then get mad if I decide to move it.
Everything is not going to be perfect,
Or even close to it.
We might argue over the smallest thing.
About who did what, or why your tone goes from
"*over it*."

to "*back into it*" when you talk to someone else.
If we're out and about and suddenly you decide

that I am flirting with the waiter, you throw a fit
Throwing and snatching the dinner menus,
Making absurd requests.
When just a few minutes ago
You complimented a male waiter
On how he looked then laughed and smiled

when I told him we didn't or
Rather you didn't need his help.
We're far from the perfect fairytale
But as soon as you smile, I remember every reason

I fell in love with you.

When I am Around You

In the vibration of Bluetooth speakers,
Blasting loud after a few minutes of scrolling
On YouTube.
Your eyes as well as your lips speak volumes.
Song after song.
I've opened up to you, telling you more about me.
About the good, about the bad.
Dancing more as the music gets louder.
I am both wild and free, swaying and grooving.
Grabbing your hands inviting you to dance
With me.
Eventually, we'll be on the same page.
Moving together as one.
Spinning around you,
Mouthing and speaking, pretending
That I know the words to the songs I forgot.
My heart and soul are both open to you.
We can make our own melody.
One that doesn't make us feel so alone.

There is no such thing as not knowing

How to dance.

Especially when I am around you.

Been Able to Reach

He remembers her smile—the way it always began slowly, with a soft twitch of the corners of her lip, then spread helplessly across her mouth even as she tried to fight it. Back then, she didn't like to show any signs of softness. She viewed it as a weakness, a crack that the world could split open within her. But from that moment, the very first time he saw her smile, he was drawn to her. A magnet, a moth, a homing pigeon flying back to its roost. He was a weary traveler, seeing a cottage in the distance with the lights on.

As it turned out, that smile was rare, and he was lucky to have seen it at all. Just as often, she would keep her face frozen in faux indifference, her lower lip pulled tight until her chin wrinkled. She would search within herself for some kind of biting remark, lashing out as surely as a stray cat with its street-sharpened claws. Others would wince away from it or try to stay back when they saw her, thinking that she was cold or standoffish. He was the only one who never backed away because he hardly ever felt the sting. Instead, he felt a promise: that he'd work hard to summon her next smile and feel the full radiance of having it directed only at him. Even after her smile had faded, he would search her face for the lingering signs of its warmth, as if he

was prodding the embers of a fire for one last hot coal.

In those early days, the heat was all he had to cling to. Both searched through their pockets for loose change, clutching it like a lifeline. It was hard on him, but even harder for her. He had always been adaptable, a wildflower seed able to take root even in the sprawling city concrete. Despite what she might insist to others, she admitted to him privately that she craved stability, that she resented change unless she had time to prepare for it. After she lost her job, he sat by her side for four eternally stretching months, hearing the world tell them "No" repeatedly. He paid the bills, moved her into his place, and refused to hear any argument otherwise. He was amazed every day that she let him.

They combed through advertisements for job vacancies, they placed phone call after phone call, sent email after email. It felt like some desperate cry launched up towards the stars, only to linger unanswered in the dark. Sometimes she would still push him away, shutting down as surely as if a dark curtain had been drawn behind her eyes. But more and more often, in quiet moments, they dreamed together of something more than this.

With his words, he painted her a picture of the home they would build together. She chuckled as if she didn't believe it, as if he would ever joke about something like that. To draw her into his dream, he asked her mundane questions, listening patiently to

her answers so that he could one day make them a reality. What color would she paint the walls? Green, of course. A soft sage green that feels like a hug. Or maybe it would be cream. Not off-white, but cream, enough yellow to feel that the room was catching the sunshine and cradling it inside. They wouldn't hire a painter. They would do it themselves, stroke by stroke.

Would they buy houseplants? Of course not. They would die soon enough—but she wanted to hang paintings on the walls, landscapes of rolling fields of wheat and towering mountains. One day, should they go on a trip to see the mountains themselves? Yes, and they should bring back another painting of the scenery so that they can imagine climbing inside and reliving a crisp sunrise.

Late at night, they would curl into each other like parentheses, perfect punctuation marks underneath the sheets. Sometimes, just before she fell asleep, she would let out a hard breath and turn to face him suddenly. In those moments, her fears would come spilling out, as if the proximity to sleep pulled down some kind of wall in her heart.

On one of these sleepless nights, she told him about herself as a child. He had seen the pictures, of course, a little girl with freckles wearing bows in her hair—but that night, she told him about the heart of her childhood self. How everything had made her laugh, and the world seemed like a harmless joke designed to entertain her. "When did that laughter

go away?" she asked him. In the soft notes of her voice, he could hear that small child asking the same question.

He didn't have an answer; just folded her into his arms and smelled summer on her hair. "We'll find it again, together," he said, instead.

As if they had summoned it together, she woke up the next morning to a missed phone call. They listened to the voice message together, and then they went shopping for clothes for her new job. She was tense the entire time, her fists clenching against her thighs on the drive as if she was anticipating this new thing being ripped away from her as well.

As a child, he had liked to place an ice cube on the hot pavement outside and see the edges go soft and formless before it disappeared entirely. It was a game for him, trying to recognize the last moment before the cube was no longer ice at all. Just like that same childhood game, he watched her thaw.

"What if everything's different now?" she asked him one night, her voice tight with anxiety. He felt that same anxiety in his chest, a small floating bubble, but didn't reach into it. Instead, he wrapped it in love, insulating it, so that it would never see the light of day. "My darling," he answered, "What if it all stays the same?"

As the months blended into years, and then those years blurred together, he tried to cling to every change he saw in her, as if cataloging them would

allow him to remember every person she had ever been. Some of those changes were the smallest things; things that he only noticed because he tried to learn everything about the way she existed in the world. She no longer liked wearing ripped jeans, she grew out her hair, she developed an undying affection for both cats and houseplants—two things she previously swore were a waste of both time and money.

She insisted on adopting the oldest cat in the shelter; the one that had been sitting there, loveless, for the longest amount of time. It was ten years old and missing half an ear, and he soon lost count of the times that he caught her cradling the cat like a baby, telling it that she wouldn't change a thing, running the tip of her finger along the ragged edge of its ear.

These days, he can't hide from the truth: he knows that he has changed as well, but he's less familiar with the little shifts within himself. When she comments on his new shirts, or the way his shoulders have broadened, he knows that she watches him in the same way that he watches her. He can't imagine it, that anybody could look at him and see a miracle, but he sees the truth of it shining bright in her eyes. Sometimes he was afraid that they both would have changed too much, shifted irreversibly away from the people they had been when they met and fell in love.

Every seven years, the cells of the body regenerate completely, leaving a person who is, hypothetically,

completely new. This is a fact that she taught him once, years ago, speaking with so much hope in her voice at the idea that she could one day be somebody different. He disagrees. So much changes, but so much stays the same. Those neural pathways are still cemented in his nervous system, sending sparks of chemical messages whenever he sees her. It's a choice, a habit, a promise that will never be broken.

He loves her exactly as she was seven years ago, and he loves her in the present day, with new cells as building blocks for the same familiar form that he holds in his arms every night. The seasons of their lives shifted around them, but they shifted with it.

There were nights where he wondered if they would be pushed apart, like two magnets flipped in the palm of a hand, no longer attracting but repelling. What if the new version of her no longer viewed him in the same old way? The answer was not a sudden realization, but a full-body truth that settled into his heart one day, as if it had always been a soft bird roosting there. He said it out loud to himself in the mirror: They didn't need to love each other the same way that they always had. They had become new people, loving each other in new ways. And throughout it all, there was always that one constant, thrumming underneath their lives like the one heartbeat that the world could never snuff out. It was the rhythm of that heartbeat that guided his

hands as he stroked her face or ran his fingers through her hair: love, love, love, love.

He looks at her now, looks at the way her face can hold onto her smile, with all the new lines etched on her skin. The happiness lingers at the corners of her mouth and the soft skin at the corners of her eyes, where he likes to press his lips and imagine he is kissing all versions of her face at once. This is the version of her that he always saw, that he always knew she could be.

He remembers her hardened exterior, the prickles that she directed at anybody who got close to her. Sometimes, he marvels that he knew what was underneath. Other times, he can't believe that nobody else had realized along with him, that he somehow hadn't spent years fighting suitor after suitor for her attention.

When he looks at her, he sees every smile that has ever crossed her face, young and old, in the good times and the bad. The gap-toothed childhood smiles he's seen in her photo albums, the tight-lipped smiles in the dark and cold of their early life together, and the days when it seemed as if she would never smile again, only to be caught off-guard by some small joy that the world brought to her. He feels all those smiles blooming within him at once, deep inside, where even the sunlight has never been able to reach.

Few Pots and Pans

Whisking, stirring, tasting

Chopping.

The scent of garlic takes over the air.

I love cooking for and with you.

For a split moment, everything disappears

That's not in this kitchen.

Regardless of what we cook.

You smile and ask what you can do to help.

Grabbing the whisk and stirring the sauce

For the pasta.

We taste in anticipation of sizzle,

In unrelated caramel sugar glaze.

Nothing compares to the magic that we make.

The heat of the stove, the heat shared between

You and me.

Outside of a few pots and pans.

Your kiss is my favorite spice that goes,

With any meal

Movie Night

What do you want to watch?
Just you. Me, and this remote of
endless possibility.
We can stop on something we've
already seen,
Or we can go for something brand new.
Long as it feels right.
Short description after short
description.
We can always cut it off and pick
something else if it's too slow.
Regardless of what we watch, I'll lay my
head on your lap.
If I start to doze off, you'll show me how
much you care.
By shaking me, telling me to wake up.
You could just tell me that you're
Enjoying the moment as much as I am.
But you'd rather highlight how I always

fall asleep when I am with you.

Your attitude never lasts long,

Before you turn your lips up in the air

Then laugh.

After a while, the screen will

Flicker across our face whether we're

Awake to watch it or not.

Bright flashes of red, yellow, white and

blue.

I always enjoy my movie nights

with you.

However we were before we fell asleep I am sure to change.

As we become each other's blanket,

Draped across each other.

The remote lost somewhere under us.

When I wake up mid-sleep and see your

sleeping face.

There isn't a scene in movie history

That could replace this.

He watched her thaw, thinking about her question, about how everything

could be different. The anxiety in his chest mirrored the anxiety in hers, he

responded with reassurance, hoping that things would stay the same.

Knowing that there is a slight possibility that things might not.

Tales About Storms

Of all the fairytales that we've heard growing up,

have you believed any of them to be true since you've grown up?

Or have you forgotten about them all in a means to live?

When I am with you, there is no such thing as a cloudy sky,

regardless of the many puddles we pass on our way home.

The way home a celebration,

paved in the way that you walk,

the way that you talk.

The storm inside of me has dissipated by the sun in your smile.

Not out of fear, but out of joy. Coiled up in what was once rage,

now a release of what can be defined as love unbridled.

Stretched out and relaxed without a care in the world.

If you ask me what I believe, I'll tell you.

I am living in a fairytale.

The sight of you, the living proof that made me believe again.

Even if this is your sole purpose in my life,

I am forever grateful to be in your presence.

Sunshine in the Darkness

Before I met you, I was afraid to grow.

I never really wanted to show anyone the full me

because people used to fool me. Fake hugs, love,

smiles, and handshakes are some of the things I felt I couldn't escape

before I met you.

You're my sunshine in a world full of darkness.

the beat in my chest when I feel heartless.

Regardless of everything that's happened through the day,

you always come and say, 'Hey love it's going to be okay.'

You'll hug me and run your fingers through my beard.

An annoying act to some but oh so necessary to me.

My heart stayed on lock and key,

but you had the tool and the demeanor that flung it open.

Before I met you, there was no sunshine, only rain.

On the outside, I didn't complain, but on the inside,

I felt I needed an umbrella.

Always wet, never dry.

But when we met,

you could look in my eye and see past the mask.

I was never a task for you.

You would sit on the phone for hours, just to hear me ramble.

Others would take being with me as a gamble, but you—you thought differently.

My sunshine in the darkness.

Love Letter

"I want to write you a love letter that
reveals everything to you that
I don't say when we're in person.
When I do, I hope that you don't judge.
My handwriting is too bad,
overwhelmed by the fact that
I wrote you a letter when I could've easily texted you
or picked up the phone and called you.
When I do, I'll spray it with cologne
with the hope that it fills your mind
with thoughts of me when you get it.
I'll take a risk and do it without telling you,
in the hope that you'll reply
or at the very least keep it where you keep
all the things that mean the world to you.
When I finally sit down,
I hope my brain doesn't go blank
and I forget everything I want to tell you.
As soon as you get it,

I hope that you read it. In it,

I'll tell you how you're my moon, my stars,

the revolution that makes me spin around and around,

and how grateful I am for gravity.

Still, I move closer and closer towards you,

with every growing day and night.

To be honest, whether you reply or not.

I just want to let you know that

you were on my mind.

You're always up there doing

Something in my head.

Don't stop.

Of all the places you could be, I love

that you go there the most

Bloom

I am reborn

In the fire of your eyes.

Where there was once ice,

There is now fire.

In this moment

We've witnessed winter

Turn to spring.

We've grown like vines

Arms spread out everywhere,

They could not reach before.

With desire a short bloom

Away.

The fierce sun that is

Love.

Covers us.

Wealth

The world around us
Flakes and crumbles away.
We never felt like we belonged anyway.
Through broken buildings and slumped
Over homes.
Let's plant our feet in one of the cracks
Of broken plaster.
Over by the headlights of one of the crushed
And bent cars.
Through destruction.
Some of the most beautiful things
Can be found.
Us being one of them.
In one of the open cracks of the earth,
We'll stand where everything else
Has crumbled and flaked away.
What woe that existed between us
Will become the foundation
That embraces our ankles.

I love you, not because

You're the only thing left to hold on to.

I've loved you before all of the distractions

Were taken away.

Although the world around us

Will eventually fade into dust.

Us along with it.

You're the only true means of wealth

I've known.

We Too

Let's grab the cards
Let's shuffle them up.
There's nothing to fear.
Let them reveal a truth,
That we may or may not know.
Two reflections, one of you. One of me.
The magician waves his wand,
The empress appears revealing her love.
A pentacle hidden in her smile,
Arranged among the rest.
Shared in a language of cards.
Another shuffle, another pull,
followed by another.
A reflection of you,
a reflection of me.
The fool dances on the edge
of the moon. Fortified with stars.
Through joy, through pain.
Through the rubble of twisted and

Contoured towers.

Soon, we too, shall weather the storm.

Continuously

Since I was a boy I've always been infatuated with keys.
What they look like, what they represent, what they smell like.
Everywhere that they could've been
That I myself couldn't have thought at the time.
Some keys are lost intentionally, some by mistake.
I've always wanted a key of my own that symbolizes
That I too, have something of importance.
Now that I've gotten older. A key that I hope to never lose.
One day, I know that it is going to happen as life itself
Is also tangible.
Like most things that become lost.
I hope that it reaches the hands of another boy or girl
And that it encourages them of the importance
Of something to safeguard and protect.
Since I've become older,

I've become very fond of a key

that I've made of every memory that I have of you.

Along the way, I've left many hints behind to remind me where

I might've placed it if ever I lost it.

I've hidden them in your voice, the look in your eye,
beneath the throb of your heart where I too
will continuously knock,
until I cannot anymore.

Golden Moments

These moments may seem small,
the coffee in the morning,
the way we curl around each other.
in bed like two spoons
in the cutlery drawer.
But what you don't know
Is that every moment reaches out
and touches the rest of my day,
coloring it as golden as the sun,
as golden as you.
I bask in the light of
those memories, always looking
for the next small moment.
Because, of course, those small
moments mean everything.
as long as they are shared
with you.

4:45 AM

Morning sun ain't up yet.
Ain't got time to mess around.
Make sure this pretty girl is up
ready for work.
I dial her number.
The phone rings.
I hang up and call back.
I hear her voice, sweet, raspy.
Unravel like
a cinnamon roll.
I say to her, you up?
First thing to cross my mind.
Broke my sleep thinking about her.
Morning sun ain't up yet.
Here I am half-awake in a dream.
Gotta make sure her pretty face
Is up, and ready for work.
Start that pretty face with a smile
Before she faces the day.

Never mind the morning sun.
Spent all night spinning round
That moon at midnight.
Admiring that starry dress.
Ain't got time to mess around
With that dang on morning sun.
Got to make sure this pretty girl
Up for work

From Work

Later in the evening,
I will make my way to pick you up from work.
I will pull up to your job, you'll reach out your arms
and hug me as soon as you get in the car.
I'll ask about your day, the car now in motion.
the radio setting the mood, filling the gaps
in between the words of your day.
Your eyes will meet mine and I'll smile.
having waited all day to see you.
traffic slim to none this late
in the evening. nothing but you,
me, a few other cars, this radio,
and a few lights.
We'll drive further into the night.
I'll tell you that I always enjoy our rendezvous.
We'll laugh, we'll talk.
forgetting about the stress of the day.
passing the vacant parking lots of
closed businesses,

third-shift employees parking their cars,

and late-night fast-food spots.

lines wrapped behind the building.

the radio plays a 90’s slow jam.

one that we’ll sing and dance to.

At this point,

I don't know who's more excited to see who.

The saving grace of obsession.

I’ll see in your eyes that you're tired.

Then I’ll say

hold on tight, we'll be home soon.

He cherishes her, regardless of the form she takes. loving every person

that she becomes. Good, bad, or indifferent. The seasons of our life

aren't set in stone. a new memory, as subtle as it may seem, binds us further.

One of the biggest secrets in love is perhaps to grow together.

Crumbs of You

When we leave there is always a reminder.
the days that have passed.
the meals that we've ate.
There is always beauty to be found in a mess.
It’s cute in a way.
although they can lead to ants and other
outside pest that can creep in.
although crumbs.
before going to grab the vacuum
or sweeping the cracks of the leather couch
with a napkin.
there is always a thought of you
that follows the crumbs.
these crumbs may not make or break
the biggest things in life.
but in those moments when I clean my house
when you're back at your place.
you'll never know how at first, I get mad
when I find these crumbs.

Then I smile and think about what happened to cause

These crumbs to drop and fall into these hard to get out of places.

I relive those exact moments.

To this day.

I am still cleaning up crumbs of popcorn.

When we leave and go our separate ways

There is always a reminder.

The days that have passed.

The meals that we've eaten.

Especially when you've spent the night.

Whenever I've had a long day

And my back crashes against the padding of the couch.

More often, you're the first thing I think about.

Before I go and grab the vacuum.

Outside the Box

We reach for the last slice.
Fingers touch and eyes lock.
In a world with enough scarcity
I've had my fill.
I've eaten until my heart's content,

and offer you the last slice.
It was yours from the beginning.
There was never anything to ask.
Before the dough was baked, before
the free pieces of sausage and
pepperoni rattled around the box.
There are certain things in life that we cannot hide.
Undeniable flavors that coax our tongue.
So take the last slice
and enjoy the last bite.
This is a hunger that goes beyond the physical.
Every time I kiss you.
I'll remember how my tongue rattles
Around your mouth, the same way.

What Happened to Sunday?

Last night, I've dreamed of you, and I
Together in a cozy little home.
Where we laugh and dream.
No matter how the road twists and turns
Along life's pavement.
My love for you only grows.
My best friend, my partner in crime.
Together with me in a cozy little home
That we call our own.
We make the perfect team.
We go to work and come home.
Soon do it all over again.
When I am in your arms
Every night feels like the weekend.
Trying my best to live out the longest Saturday.
Ever.
Last night, I've dreamed of you, and I
Together in a cozy little home.
No matter how the road twists and turns

Along the grooves of life's pavement.
Sunday always feels so far away when
I am with you.

Love like Breakfast

I am renewed and ready to tackle the rest of the day.

your lips a sweet surrender, regardless of

being sunny side up or scrambled.

The thought of you drizzled, soon to melt like cheese.

Feed and nourish my soul with every bite.

The smell of bacon lingering in the air.

a burning desire, soon to be nibbled down.

Finding a new home inside of me.

I try not to smack but love like this

I can't resist.

You've given me the strength to get through the day.

before I leave, I grab a biscuit

and sandwich the eggs, and bacon in between.

with every bite I take,

I have something to remind you.

Lunch and dinner don't come to mind.

This is the best meal I've had all day.

Sun and Sky

In the heat of the sun,
we stood.
lovers turned into best friends.
we jammed and rocked out to our own
playlist.
my confidante, my secret tree
I've whispered all my secrets too.
wild and crazy, is what we are.
searching for brighter days
in each other's arms.
I soar the highest whenever you're around.
when you're not, I am restless.
Everything seems so boring.
So dull.
you set my heart on fire for all to see.
under the heat of the sun,
we stood.
lovers turned into best friends.
I've found shelter in the arms of your sky.

no matter what city we're in.

my best friend, my lover.

The sun cannot exist without the sky.

Fierce

Tell me what's on your mind.
The soft things you've become fierce
To protect.
I'll lay my head against you
and build a fire where my heart throbs
and waits for your presence.
Where the fire burns the logs
Made in the forest of skin where you sit
on the middle of the couch.
No matter how dark it gets
Have no fear,
This fire will not go out.
No matter how fierce the world may
See you.
My eyes burn like the ember that crackles
In front of us.
I too, am fierce, when it comes to you.

He reflects on how they've changed over time, noticing the little things in each other. The idea of becoming new individuals together didn't seem so scary after all. Despite their fears of drifting from one another. Their love for each other never changed. They acknowledge the way that they've grown and embrace the new ways they love each other. Regardless of life's changes. Their love is not just a memory, but a living, breathing thing that grows and changes with them.

FROM THE AUTHOR

This book serves as a vivid exploration of both love and growth, capturing the beauty of a relationship that expands and matures over time. Wadley, Allen, and Ray skillfully use the intricacies of a relationship to showcase how even in life's simplest moments, with attention and care, we can withstand and thrive through adversity if we're patient enough to not solely focus on the negative. Together, they bring this concept to fruition with heartfelt prose, demonstrating adaptability and the changes that come with creative reflection. Through these moments, we discover how they can have the most profound impact, regardless of age. Remember, there is always time for reflection and introspection, with a bit of creativity. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you so much for supporting us and our work throughout the duration of this book. If you've enjoyed our work and believe that it can benefit or inspire others, an honest review on Amazon (or the book retailer you purchased from) would be greatly appreciated by all of us. Also, the font used was chosen with you in mind, to make it easier for everyone's eyes. From our family to yours, be blessed and stay focused on all the possibilities open in your life right now. It's all part of the journey.

Namaste,

Peace & Blessings

KeWayne Wadley